

## PART TWO

# Army Physical Readiness Training Strategy

[Part Two introduction paragraph(s)]

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## Chapter 4

### The Army's Physical Readiness Training Program

“The quality of the unit is determined by the over-all picture of physical condition and total military fitness of **all** its members. It is more important that all men in a unit receive the benefits of a balanced and well directed program of physical training than that a few members achieve record performances. The physical training program, therefore, is directed toward **the total conditioning of all men.**”

FM 21-20, Physical Training (1946)

#### SECTION I - PURPOSE OF THE PRT PROGRAM

4-1. The primary purpose of a PRT program is to develop and maintain a high level of unit physical readiness. While attaining this fundamental purpose, other valuable outcomes are achieved. Many basic military skills essential to personal safety and effective performance in combat operations are developed through PRT such as: marching, running, swimming, jumping, vaulting, climbing and crawling. Maneuverability and mental alertness enhance survivability. These skills are developed through participation in combatives training, negotiating obstacles and competitive activities. Teamwork, aggressiveness, confidence, resourcefulness, a will to win and the ability to think and act quickly under pressure are other valuable products of a well-conducted PRT program.

4-2. Precise execution of PRT develops discipline. Highly disciplined and physically fit soldiers make for a corps spirit that inspires organizations to dare because of their ability to do. Therefore, PRT programs must develop every soldier's physical potential to the fullest. This enables soldiers to perform all duties with the greatest confidence of success under all circumstances and conditions.

“Such discipline may therefore be defined as the voluntary, intelligent and cheerful subordination of every individual in an equal degree with every other individual of the mass to which he belongs, and of which he is an interdependent and not independent unit, through which the object of the mass can alone be attained.”

LTC Herman J. Koehler

## **SECTION II - COMMAND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **COMMAND EMPHASIS**

4-3. Leaders must emphasize the value of PRT. Clearly explaining the objectives and benefits of the program ensures that the time allotted for PRT is used effectively. Commanders must also provide resources to support a program that will improve each soldier's level of physical readiness. Mandatory participation is essential. All individuals, regardless of rank, age, or gender, benefit from regular exercise. In some instances, leaders will need to make special efforts to overcome recurring problems that interfere with regular training. To foster a positive attitude, unit leaders and instructors must be knowledgeable, understanding, and fair, but demanding. A high level of physical readiness cannot be attained by simply going through the motions. Smart, challenging training to standard is essential. Leaders should not punish soldiers who fail to perform to standard; this often does more harm than good. They must recognize individual differences and motivate soldiers to put forth their best efforts. The application of reconditioning PRT will progressively bring soldiers with medical profiles back up to standard, training them within the limits of their profiles and with the unit whenever possible.

### **LEAD BY EXAMPLE**

4-4. Effective leadership is critical to the success of a PRT program. Leaders must understand and practice Army physical readiness doctrine. Their example will emphasize the importance of PRT and will highlight it as a key element of the unit's training mission. Command presence and participation at PRT formations and assessments will set a positive example for subordinates.

### **LEADERSHIP TRAINING**

4-5. Commanders must ensure that leaders are trained to supervise and conduct PRT. The doctrinal concepts and unit program models presented in this manual are starting points for commanders and PRT leaders to optimize unit PRT and assessment.

## EVALUATION AND STANDARDS

4-6. Commanders must utilize the unit's mission and METL as criteria for evaluating PRT program effectiveness.

## ENSURE SAFETY

4-7. Safety is a major consideration when planning and evaluating PRT programs. Commanders will conduct a risk management assessment of all PRT activities to ensure that they do not place their soldiers at undue risk for injury or accident. The following are examples of items the commander should address: environmental conditions, emergency procedures, facilities and the differences in age, gender and level of conditioning of each soldier in the unit.

“The best form of welfare for the troops is first-class training.”

B. H. Liddell Hart, British Naval Tactician

## SECTION III - UNIT PRT PROGRAMS

4-8. The goal of Army PRT is to improve each soldier's physical ability to survive and win on the battlefield. Physical readiness includes all aspects of physical performance and must do more than prepare soldiers to take the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT). Well-planned PRT maximizes physical performance in the completion of critical soldier and leader tasks that support the unit's Mission/METL. PRT is the commander's program. It must reflect his goals and be based on the principles of progression, variety and precision. With ever changing OPTEMPO, units and soldiers must continue to train as they fight. Training requirements dictate how often and how rigorously PRT is conducted.

4-9. Commanders and fitness leaders in TOE and TOA units that follow GREEN/AMBER/RED training cycles (IAW FM 25-100, Training the Force) must develop PRT programs within the constraints of each training period.

- GREEN: Organizations in GREEN periods conduct planned training without distractions and external taskings. Training focus is primarily on collective tasks with individual and leader tasks integrated during multi-echelon unit training. Maximum soldier attendance is required at all prime time mission essential training. Regular PRT should be conducted five times per week. GREEN periods are optimal times for conducting PRT.
- AMBER: Organizations in AMBER periods are assigned support taskings beyond the capability of those units in the RED period, but commanders strive for minimal disruption to AMBER organizations' training programs. Emphasis is placed on small unit, crew and individual training. PRT may be conducted three to five times per week at small unit and/or individual levels.

- RED: Organizations in RED periods execute administrative and support requirements. RED periods may be restrictive in conducting regular PRT so it is imperative that units take every opportunity to conduct small unit and/or individual PRT whenever possible.

4-10. Commanders and fitness leaders in units that do not follow GREEN/AMBER/RED training cycles, such as professional development schools, hospitals, military police, communication centers and Department of the Army staff, have various challenges in planning and conducting PRT. Every effort should be made to conduct phased unit and/or individual PRT five times per week, refer to Chapter 5. This chapter provides a variety of sample PRT program schedules to illustrate the implementation of toughening and conditioning phase activities.

## **SECTION IV – INDIVIDUAL PRT PROGRAMS**

4-11. All soldiers must understand that it is their personal responsibility to achieve and sustain a high level physical readiness. Many soldiers are assigned to duty positions that prohibit participation in collective unit PRT programs. Examples are DA staff, MACOM staffs, hospitals, service-school staff and faculty, recruiting, ROTC, Army Reserve and National Guard units. In such units, commanders must develop leadership environments that encourage and motivate soldiers to accept individual responsibility for their own physical readiness. Physical readiness requirements are the same for these personnel as for others. Leaders and individual soldiers need to use the fundamental principles and techniques outlined in this manual to help them achieve and sustain high levels of physical readiness. Individual PRT programs must be designed to improve the individual's contribution to the unit's physical readiness. Calisthenics, exercise drills and running techniques employed in unit PRT can be performed individually or with a partner. Individual and small group PRT should develop and maintain a level of physical readiness equivalent to that required to for success in performance of the unit mission and METL.

## **SECTION V - RECONDITIONING PRT PROGRAMS**

4-12. The objective of the reconditioning program is to restore physical fitness levels that enable soldiers to re-enter the toughening and conditioning phases. Commanders and health care personnel will provide special assistance to soldiers who are assigned to reconditioning PRT due to one or more of the following medical conditions: injury, illness and surgery. Only train the soldier in accordance with their profile limitations. If you have any questions about the limitations of the profile, then ask the medical professionals to explain more to you. Stay involved with the medical personnel as you train these soldiers and ensure you stay in your lane. Soldiers with medical profiles are at high risk of re-injury, especially in the early stages of their profile. Allow them the adequate time to heal and get stronger. Your job, as a leader, is to improve the soldier's performance, not to

cause further injury. Whenever possible, and within the limits of their profiles, these soldiers should participate in unit PRT.

## **SECTION VI - PREGNANCY PRT**

4-13. Upon diagnosis of pregnancy, the soldier is exempt from the regular PRT Program and exempt from the APFT, as outlined in Chapter 9, AR 350-41, for the duration of the pregnancy and up to six months past pregnancy termination. Soldiers enter the toughening phase of training at the conclusion of the six month postpartum recovery period. Until that time, soldiers may participate in an approved installation Pregnancy and Postpartum Physical Training (PPPT) Program.

## **SECTION VII – OVERWEIGHT SOLDIER**

4-14. It is not necessary for overweight soldiers to perform PRT with a special group; they will continue to train with their units. These soldiers require supplemental PRT and education on diet and exercise. Refer to Figure 5-5 (Sample Overweight Toughening Phase PRT), Figure 5-13 (Conditioning Phase PRT) and AR 600-9 (The Army Weight Control Program). The primary focus of supplemental PRT sessions for overweight soldiers who perform unit PRT will be on low impact activities of long duration and low intensity to achieve caloric expenditure and optimal fat loss. Aim for 30-60 minutes of exercise by either walking or splitting the session among machines (i.e. 15 minutes each on the bike, stepper, rower, etc.). These soldiers should be able to fully recover from any additional PRT and not risk overuse injuries with this training. Overweight soldiers not performing unit PRT should still follow the activities on the unit schedule and supplement with further aerobic exercise. Resistance training for overweight soldiers should initially be limited to normal PRT activities such as calisthenics and dumbbells. Resistance exercise can stimulate muscle growth and aid fat loss, since the more lean mass you have, the more calories that are used to sustain it. But weight loss may not occur if lean mass is being added through resistance training. In this case, the soldiers will have a lower body fat percentage but not a lower weight on the scales. Since the regulations state that satisfactory progress for this program is measured in pounds, not body fat, it may be wise to spend the first few weeks of the program limiting the amount of resistance training. After the soldier has shown satisfactory weight loss, they may add resistance training in the gym to stimulate further muscular development.

## **SECTION VIII – APFT/UNIT PHYSICAL READINESS STANDARD FAILURE**

4-15. Most units are diverse in physical readiness levels due to injuries, illness, deployment and reception of new soldiers. This diversity may affect the number of APFT and unit physical readiness standard failures. Over

time, a solid PRT program will allow soldiers to achieve the Army and unit standards. Supplemental training is not always better; performing high-quality training once per day is a better approach than doing additional high-volume training that may lead to overuse injuries.

## **SECTION IX – NEW SOLDIER**

4-16. The new soldier's threshold level of physical performance may be below the minimum threshold of his gaining unit. He may be a borderline APFT performer, borderline overweight, fresh out of BCT, AIT or OSUT and not accustomed to the demand placed on the lower extremities during a normal duty day. These soldiers are facing new conditions relating to physical performance (acclimatization to altitude, temperature and humidity), which may take up to four weeks to adapt. Although soldiers leave IET in the conditioning phase, they may de-train due to leave, transit and inprocessing at their new duty assignments. Initially, new soldiers are placed in the toughening phase to allow for gradual increases of intensity and time during PRT and to safely bring them up to the Army and unit standards (refer to Paragraph 4-11, Phased Training).

## **SECTION X – INITIAL ENTRY TRAINING (IET)**

4-17. IET consists of the following elements: Basic Combat Training (BCT), Advanced Individual Training (AIT) and One Station Unit Training (OSUT).

### **BCT**

4-18. The training program in BCT brings soldiers up to a level of physical readiness that prepares them for the rigors of AIT. New soldiers report to BCT at various levels of physical readiness and ability. During BCT, many of them pass through the toughening into the conditioning phase. During the first weeks of training, the focus is on progressive training of the whole body. To minimize the risk of injury, exercises must be done precisely, and the intensity must progress gradually. Special training (Fitness Training Unit, Physical Training Rehabilitation Program) should be considered for soldiers who fail to maintain the unit or group rate of progression. Commanders should evaluate each new soldier who falls below the BCT standard and give special assistance to improve deficiencies. Supplemental training should not be used as punishment for a new soldier's inability to perform well. More PRT is not necessarily better. Emphasis should be placed on the QUALITY of the training, not the quantity of exercise performed.

### **AIT**

4-19. AIT focuses on technical and MOS-oriented subjects. Most soldiers arriving from BCT are already well into the conditioning phase. Therefore,

PRT prepares soldiers to meet the physical requirements of their initial duty assignments.

## OSUT

4-20. PRT in OSUT brings soldiers through the conditioning phase and prepares them for the rigors of their first duty assignment. During the early phase of OSUT, new soldiers follow the same progression as BCT. The AIT phase of OSUT prepares soldiers to meet the demands of their first unit.

## SECTION XI – RESERVE COMPONENT (RC) UNIT PRT PROGRAMS

4-21. PRT is an individual responsibility for all soldiers regardless of component. This is truly the case for RC soldiers whose collective training periods are spread throughout the training year. The physical readiness requirement of RC mission essential tasks varies, but no mission is without some level of physical demand. RC units must meet the challenge of being physically ready to perform their mission with less collective training time. Individuals and units may not have time to bring their level of readiness up to standard prior to deployment. Therefore, unit PRT activities must be incorporated into Individual Duty for Training (IDT) periods. Commanders must determine how much priority to place on PRT activities and allocate time and resources accordingly. At a minimum, one hour on PRT activities should be incorporated into every eight hours of unit training during IDT periods. During AT periods, units should conduct PRT at least five times per week. Valuable RC collective PRT time should not be focused on preparing soldiers to take the APFT; nor, should the focus of PRT during IDT periods be on achieving a “training effect”. The focus must be on precisely teaching and instructing the activities in this manual. There may be occasions where soldiers are expected to perform at near-maximal effort during training, such as in the conduct of a unit road march or other training assessments and activities. This should be the exception not the norm. A training program in which soldiers are expected to perform at near-maximal effort once a month will not achieve the desired physiological changes, no matter how intense. This type of program will probably cause more harm than good. An ideal unit PRT program will strive to give soldiers the knowledge they need to conduct their own quality PRT sessions between unit assemblies. The program should increase soldier motivation so that they will habitually train on their own. Incorporating the PRT Assessments in this manual into IDT periods is one way to effect motivation with the added benefit of providing commanders a physical readiness snapshot. Many of the drills in this manual support the type of RC unit PRT program described in this section. For example, soldiers would collectively learn Calisthenic Drill 1 during the unit assembly, and then train on their own raising their proficiency and readiness level at the same time. Soldiers will then be prepared for PRT sessions conducted during annual training or other collective training periods. Most of the drills in this manual do not require expensive or hard-to-obtain equipment, so they can easily be performed individually. Soldiers are challenged mentally when precision is enforced in all activities. USAR TPU and ARNG M-day soldiers

with civilian health and fitness experience should be utilized to assist in conducting the program; especially the reconditioning program. However, all NCOs should be able to learn and effectively teach the drills in this manual. Figure 5-1 and 5-7 show sample 5-day PRT schedules that RC units can use during their two-week annual training period. The focus of collective PRT during unit annual training should be on increasing the unit physical readiness with associated benefits like confidence, discipline, and the will to win. The PRT activities on the sample unit AT schedule must be introduced during IDT periods and trained individually prior to AT for this to be effective (Refer to Figures 5-14 and 5-15).